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The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Martin Montemore
Conducted by Richard Burks Verrone, Ph.D.
August 14, 2003
Transcribed by Brooke Tomlin

NOTE: Text included in brackets [] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.

1 Richard Verrone: This is Dr. Richard Verrone and I am continuing my oral
2 history interview with Mr. Martin Montemore. Today is August 14, 2003. I'm in
3 Lubbock, Texas in the Special Collections Library interview room and Mr. Montemore is
4 in Kansas City, Missouri and it is about 10:40 a.m. central standard time. Sir why don't
5 we pick up where we left off? We had been discussing some specific incidences in your
6 flying and I would like you to describe what your typical day was like, if you could.

7 Martin Montemore: Are we talking about in country?

8 RV: Yes sir, in country.

9 MM: Typical day, we flew almost everyday. Occasionally, there would be a day
10 off in the sense that if you flew you had to have at least 12 hours from one flight to the
11 next flight but they would schedule in the 28 days that you were there at a particular base,
12 flying out of that base. They would schedule probably at least a day or two or three off in
13 the month but a typical day you had a mission. Typically if it was to be either early
14 morning or a late night flight. If it was an early morning flight you would probably be up
15 by 4:30 or 5:00 and then briefing at 5:00 or 5:30 and then take off just before daylight
16 and get to your first landing field by daylight. None of the landing strips, of course, had
17 any lights nor did they have any control tower. Most of them didn't have any contact
18 whatsoever with the airplane and so you were just sort of on your own. You had to be,
19 what is called daylight VFR, Visual Flying Rules applied and there was no air traffic

1 control procedures to follow because there was really no radar that was set up to control
2 the military traffic. Typical day would be you get up in the morning at 4:30 or 5:00. You
3 would get over there and probably take off just before daylight, get to your first landing
4 zone probably by daylight depending on time of year that would be around 6:00 usually.
5 Then, you flew until probably 2:30 or 3:00 and typically would have seven or eight
6 different missions, landings that you would find out about when you first went over to the
7 operations area to get your frag, to get your schedule for the day of which fields you
8 would be going to and what you would be carrying into or out of those strips. Then
9 somewhere along the line you would also have a trip back to a normal base where you
10 would refuel and have any maintenance problems looked at or whatever. Then you would
11 go back and finish your frag till probably around 3:00 or so, and you would be done. And
12 the crew would then be free to go back to the BOQ, or the housing facilities, and
13 typically people would get together and try to either cook out or go to a bar, Officers
14 club. Each housing area would have its own facilities in terms of a bar or a meeting place,
15 and typically that would go till you know 9 or 10 o'clock at night or whatever, and
16 everybody would go get a few hours of sleep and we would do the same thing the next
17 day.

18 RV: What would say was the most interesting cargo that you ever carried?

19 MM: Well, I think one of the more interesting missions I had, it wasn't so much
20 because it was a cargo but it was what they call class A. But the reason that it sticks out
21 in my mind was because I don't know if I relayed this to you but one time I went into
22 Phnom Penh Cambodia, when I had just seen on television the president saying that
23 nobody would be going more than 23 miles beyond the border of Vietnam because
24 Cambodia was not a part of the war. And I thought it was kind of funny, not funny, but
25 really strange that I would be going way way beyond that; hundreds of miles into Phnom
26 Penh that, that after seeing the president saying that no Americans would be beyond the
27 23 miles limit and I was one of them. But as far as the cargo is concerned, it is not really
28 cargo. The one that I paid most attention to is when we had bodies, body bags. I guess
29 aside from just plain cargo meaning it could be mail, it could be food, could be bombs,
30 could be ammunition, or whatever. But sometimes you would carry the sentry dogs. They
31 would be of course, in cages and all that. But it was more of an interesting mission

1 because then you would have somebody to talk to about the dogs, and how they did, and
2 what they were guarding, and why and how they trained them, and that sort of thing. It
3 just really, mostly the pilots didn't know what they were carrying typically. There were
4 many times the airplanes were loaded when the pilots weren't there. There were many
5 times that the planes were unloaded and reloaded with other stuff while the pilot is sitting
6 in the pilot seat with the engines running. The pilots do not get really involved in what
7 they were carrying so much, it was the loadmaster and the ground people. They were
8 trusted and had the judgment and whatever to do what needed to be done in terms of
9 loading the equipment or whatever the cargo happened to be and so there were many
10 times when we didn't even know what we carried.

11 RV: I imagine there was a high amount of trust for or with the loadmaster, making
12 sure everything was balanced, the weight was proper, everything like that.

13 MM: Right, absolutely, it had to be because you are running those airplanes
14 basically at the limit all the time because of the short field take off and landing
15 capabilities. But if you don't have that loaded correctly, your margin for error is really
16 small. The loadmaster has got to be very very efficient in doing their job. I guess the
17 other thing that happened, part way when I was through my tour, at least that is when I
18 heard about it, was there was a couple of airplanes that exploded instead of imploded.
19 Normally if an airplane gets shot down, it will show signs of something entering through
20 the skin of the airplane. We lost a couple of C-130's [from] that explosion, outside in or
21 from the inside out. So the theory was, although nobody knew because everybody died,
22 but the theory was that when you carried a lot of passengers that were the indigenous, I
23 mean they were the local Vietnamese citizens, that it got to a big deal to check every
24 place that you could when they left because the theory was that they would leave behind
25 a grenade or something that would, after they left. They would find it behind a panel.
26 Usually they would stick it in a cup or at least that is the theory anyways. I don't know if
27 they found any of these or not, but then after the airplane would fly for a certain period of
28 time, a jolt or a break or whatever would happen and then that would then fall over and
29 the hand grenade would become loose and free to arm itself and then explode.

30 RV: Did that ever happen on your airplane?

1 MM: No, not on my airplane, and we never found any evidence of anything on
2 the airplanes that we took off; there were other airplanes that did.

3 RV: That's what I meant.

4 MM: And there were other airplanes that did or at least that is what I heard.

5 RV: Always vigilant, you had to be.

6 MM: Right, because of a couple of incidences we became less causal about
7 checking the airplane before taking off for the next mission.

8 RV: Let's talk about the enemy, how would you describe the North Vietnamese
9 and the Viet Cong and the people of the United States were fighting against? What are
10 your general impressions?

11 MM: Well very distant as a pilot, we really don't get involved in any hand-to-
12 hand or face-to-face combat. You know, whatever we saw, it was only something that
13 was thrown at us: either a grenade, missile, or a rocket, or whatever, or a small arms fire
14 is mostly what it was. I never felt any personal contact, although I heard a lot of stories
15 about people that were on the bases that provided services to the military such as barbers,
16 janitors, or cooks, or maintenance people, or whatever. There were a lot of South
17 Vietnamese that had access to the bases. I mean they are huge bases there, just big like
18 cities, thousands maybe tens of thousands of people on them. And you always heard these
19 stories, but I never felt uncomfortable at all around any of the locals. I am sure [there]
20 must have been some of them that were not happy with us, and would have preferred to
21 have us not be there. Or to be more demonstrative than that but if it ever happened, it
22 didn't happen to me. I mean I didn't feel that way. And there were a lot of times in the
23 middle of the night they would start a lot of the tracers, and a lot of firing around the
24 perimeter of the base would happen, and the rumors were a lot of times were, 'Well they
25 shot four people and two of them were barbers at the base.' You heard those stories,
26 whether that is a fact or not, I don't know. I know that I also heard stories that people
27 would be, what they call clear their weapon at late night. And so when somebody would
28 see tracers coming from another direction, when somebody is just clearing their weapon,
29 taking the last few bullets out by shooting them. Well they think they are shooting at
30 them. So they shoot back and of course they think someone is shooting at them so then

1 now you got what they call friendly fire. People are shooting at each other and there is
2 nobody there. I don't know, I heard that.

3 RV: Did you fly with any weaponry; did you carry a side arm or anything like that
4 in the cockpit?

5 MM: Well we carried just a 38. The airplane itself did not have weaponry,
6 although there are C-130's that do carry huge amounts of armament, but ours did not.
7 We each carried a survival vest with a 38. Most people were more afraid of losing or
8 having a weapon stolen, than figuring they were ever going to use it. Because the way we
9 thought about it is if we ever got shot down, well we are never going, probably not going
10 to make it out anyway. And if you got a 38 and you're surround by people, I mean, you
11 wouldn't fire it anyway. It's silly unless you're going to fire it at yourself. But it is not
12 something that everybody dwelled on, it was just kind of a passing joke that, 'Hey they
13 give us this gun again, who's going to watch the guns this day [today]' instead of
14 thinking, 'Well I need this to get through the day,' in case they get shot down, I mean it
15 really wasn't. It really wouldn't help, we just didn't think about it much.

16 RV: Were you issued the weapons, or did you have them at all times?

17 MM: We were issued them when we left. I was stationed Ching Chuan Kang in
18 Taiwan. And so they would give us each a survival vest and a gun, which we signed out
19 individually from our personal equipment shop in Taiwan. And then when we came back
20 28 days later, then we would turn in that survival vest and the weapon by serial number,
21 back when we got to CCK. So we were not issued weapons in Vietnam, we already had
22 them when we went there. But basically nobody paid much attention to it.

23 RV: What is your impression of the Vietnamese civilians? [What] was your
24 impression?

25 MM: I thought that they were friendly, helpful, there's not a lot of interaction.
26 There's not, I mean I am sure that they were mostly uneducated and certainly not
27 bilingual. None of us knew anything. So it was very difficult to communicate directly,
28 except by sign language. You know, say pointing at something, or making a gesture that
29 means you're going to sleep now. And so you know, try to hurry or try to leave or
30 whatever it is. Sometimes we would land at right after day break, and we flew flights all
31 night. Then if you go have breakfast, and maybe a few beers or something, and then

1 about noon, and you got another mission at 10 o'clock, well you got to go to bed
2 sometime. You got to get some sleep sometime, so sometimes our schedules were such
3 that we didn't go to bed till 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon. We would be getting up at
4 6,7, or 8 o'clock that night to fly another night mission and once you got into that
5 schedule, you would stay in that schedule for a few days. And then you would get a day
6 or so off, and then you could switch back to the day but you couldn't go from night to
7 day because you didn't have enough time in between to get your mandatory crew rest. I
8 think it was 12 hours, it may have been 10. But anyway there was a certain amount of
9 time that you couldn't fly from landing to take off. There was not a lot of personal
10 communication, but I felt safe and I never had any personal animosity, nor did I have
11 much personal really communication, except to maybe joke with them; or sometimes I
12 would try to give them a coke or a candy bar or something you know if I had one. So the
13 lack of a mutual language made it difficult for us to be able to, you know, have much
14 interaction, but I never had any fear.

15 RV: How much contact did you have with home?

16 MM: None. I probably got a letter from somebody once or twice a week, but I
17 very seldom wrote home.

18 RV: Why was that?

19 MM: Oh, I guess I was just too busy. I never thought about it. It never bothered
20 me. Our family is real close and real large, and I don't know, pretty soon it's Monday and
21 then it's Friday. I mean you don't care what day it is, or everyday is the same, but it is
22 just five days later so, you just didn't write something. Yes, I thought about that since
23 than a lot as to what my Mother and Father were going through when they saw every day
24 on television, all the fighting and airplanes and everybody doing it. I mean if my son
25 were over there right now, I mean, in wherever I would want a communication every day.
26 And now you can, by e-mail or by voice mail or somehow or another, there is a way to
27 communicate. But back then there was no communication, except for what they called
28 MARs. It's some sort of a radio telephone thing that you had to, I don't know, you had to
29 sign up, you had to, I don't know, anyway I never did that so

30 RV: Do you regret that today?

1 MM: I regret not communicating more because now I know what my parents
2 must have been going through. I was unmarried so I didn't have any responsibilities in
3 that respect; no family, but very close, strong, extended minority Mexican family,
4 Catholic family that did everything together, and all that. So I just didn't feel like it was
5 any big deal, I mean it is like going to school or something. Now that I think back on it, I
6 should of have communicated more because I would think that they would probably been
7 worried about that. But I didn't realize it until I became a parent. So that would have been
8 something that would have been pretty much lacking, a big lacking, on my part.

9 RV: Let me take a break for a moment and change out this disk.

10 MM: Sure.

11 RV: Can you tell me sir, let me ask about entertainment, you talked about what
12 you would do when you came home from the flight line when you finished your missions
13 and you would come back and you had some, everybody had a bar set up and you had
14 clubs, what would you all do for entertainment?

15 MM: Well it was mainly the entertainment was ourselves. Basically the crews
16 would stick together after the missions and you would go into a country with a crew, and
17 you would stay with that same crew that whole time. And you would come back out with
18 that crew. And so I would say 80 to 90 percent of our interaction with other people was
19 our own crew. Obviously there were other crews there too, but you may or may not know
20 some of them, and they may have different schedules and so you don't see them and that
21 sort of thing. But then there was occasionally they would have entertainment at some of
22 the bigger bases. They would have Korean, or Vietnamese, or Philippians, or Japanese
23 band that would come in and play for a couple of hours or something at one of the
24 Officers clubs or one of the whatever clubs. And that was always a big treat. Then there
25 was the USO thing with Bob Hope that came over, and that was a big deal too so...

26 RV: Did you get to see that?

27 MM: You know I missed it, I was there but it was an off time for me, and our
28 crew was flying and we missed it, but yes I was there. I was around it. I just didn't get to
29 see it firsthand but I talked to a lot of people that were very appreciative that he did that,
30 and I think he came more than once. I believe that he was a great, I don't know, a great
31 morale booster. To have somebody like that take their time and trouble to come over and

1 do that. So the entertainment was basically self-made. There was a lot of card playing, a
2 lot of craps playing. There was a lot of gamblers, gambling, although gambling doesn't
3 mean the same thing now as it did then, because back there it was only play money. I
4 mean nobody had any, I mean it didn't have any. There was nothing to spend money on,
5 so it didn't make any difference. It was not like you were losing 100 dollars, it was just
6 monopoly money, or whatever you want to call it, so nobody put much emphasis on
7 money, but a lot of people did gamble just for fun.

8 RV: What about any alcohol or drug use that you witnessed?

9 MM: I witnessed a lot of alcohol. I mean everybody drank. Everybody drank to
10 excess. I am sure there was a lot of drugs there, I am positive there was. But the crew, I
11 was there for two years...the crews that I was on, if there was anybody that was doing
12 any drugs, any drugs whether it be Marijuana, or anything stronger than that, I didn't
13 know about it. It's not because I am dumb, I just don't think... I am sure it was there, and
14 I am sure it was going on I guess, but it wasn't so much with the crews. I don't know
15 why. I guess maybe was because we had all the alcohol we wanted, or I don't know. I
16 don't know what the reason is, but if the guys that were in the bush, and I've talked to a
17 lot of guys that were in the Army that were in the bush. There is no doubt there was a lot
18 of marijuana developing [smoking] you know a lot of smoking and all that I guess, but it
19 never got to the crews. And I guess part of that might have been because where we stayed
20 was never in the little places. Where we stayed was Tan Son Nhut or, Cam Ranh Bay or
21 Da Nang and we were very well protected, and insulated and isolated. So we didn't have
22 the contact to go out and buy something from somebody, or whatever. It's just we were
23 always together. So alcohol use was huge, I mean you couldn't drink a dollar. I mean
24 drinks were a dime and doubles were happy hour for a dime. So if you put a dollar on the
25 bar, I mean that would be ten double drinks; and I mean you can't even drink that much.
26 So it's free basically, and so they encouraged, I think they encouraged alcohol drinking
27 and I think they encouraged smoking. They gave you cigarettes with your meals. You
28 open up what you call your MRE, and there would be your meal, and your napkin, and
29 plastic fork, and a pack of cigarettes.

30 RV: Did you smoke over there?

1 MM: Yes I did, well almost everybody smoked or at least, seemed like to me.
2 And they didn't have any rules against smoking. I mean you could smoke in the airplane
3 while you are flying. Course now you can't at all.

4 RV: What about music? What role did music play over there for you and what
5 songs come back to your mind?

6 MM: Well, those same ones that everybody probably listed you know. 'We got to
7 get out of this place', and 'Yellow River' was the way they would sing that. The oriental
8 bands, they couldn't pronounce it so they would say 'Yerrow Rivor' so it got to be a joke
9 the way. They couldn't pronounce their L's, or let's say they don't pronounce the same
10 way we do. They use R's instead of L's. The songs that were popular before you went
11 over there were the tendency the ones to be popular with you while you were there,
12 because you didn't hear the new ones. They had Armed Forces radio, and I think they had
13 a partial Armed Forces TV. But you were never around one hardly much. So I think, yes
14 they did have that Armed Forces radio because we could pick that up in the airplane. So I
15 guess they had part of that in, whatever, the Good Morning Vietnam, I think part of that
16 was fairly realistic.

17 RV: Where you able to keep up with news from back in the United States?

18 MM: No.

19 RV: Did you have a desire to?

20 MM: No, not really, not because I was trying to shut if off or anything. It's just
21 you know if you're busy, and I guess we did get once a week, maybe twice a week. Once
22 a week we got what's called *Stars and Stripes*, which was a, I think it was once or twice a
23 week. Anyway it was about all we needed. It would say some of the stuff that is going on
24 back in the States. Yes whatever is going on, the presidential election or whatever, but
25 certainly nothing of [up to] the minute. And something could happen, and it would be
26 three or four days later before you found out about it just because, I was going to say, not
27 because you are avoiding it. It's just you know you're too busy flying, and sleeping, and
28 drinking, and getting ready to do the same thing the next day to really be too concerned
29 about it.

30 RR: Did you have any R&R's?

1 MM: Well we had a lot of trips that ended up being kind of R&R's. We ended up
2 with at couple of days off in Hong Kong, Bangkok, or Tokyo, or wherever. So you would
3 get a couple of days off, but the crews did not get R&R, and kind of a technical reason,
4 because we were not stationed inside of Vietnam. We were stationed outside of Vietnam.
5 When we would go to Vietnam for 28 days, come back out for two or three days, go back
6 in for 28 days. Well, the R&R was set up for people that were stationed in country, so the
7 Army mostly. They would go for six months and then they would get, I think it was a
8 week, yes a week R&R, and they would come back for six months. Well we didn't have
9 that stress or strain of being there for six months in a row. We would go for 28 days and
10 then we would come back out for two or three days. And so anyway, they didn't extend
11 that R&R to people that were not stationed inside of Vietnam, what they call PCS.

12 RV: I was wondering if they did actually give you an official time off, but you
13 were able to take it when you could get it, I guess?

14 MM: Right, right and they would put a little fluff in there, or if the airplane would
15 break or it needs some maintenance or something, then the next thing you know you get
16 an extra day off. There wasn't a lot of thought about that, I mean about having days off or
17 not having days off, I mean it didn't really matter. You flew, and you were expected to
18 fly everyday. And then once in a while you looked down and you wouldn't be on their
19 schedule. And so that just meant you slept later, drank more, and had fun. And a lot of
20 times you would go to the gym and work out, or play basketball, or handball, or go to the
21 beach, all those things. But it never was highly counted on as, 'Oh boy this is four days
22 and I can't wait to get the next day off.' I mean it was just whatever happened, it
23 happened. And nobody, really it was ok. It was fine.

24 RV: You mentioned that you came from a Catholic family, is that correct?

25 MM: Right.

26 RV: Were your religious beliefs affected by your service in Vietnam or in the area
27 in Southeast Asia?

28 MM: No, I don't think so. You know I don't remember exactly but it seems to me
29 that I stayed with the Catholic Church even through that era, although you never knew
30 what day it was and didn't count or whatever. And they told us when we were in combat
31 zone you don't have to go to Mass every Sunday and that sort of thing, but I think it was

1 probably afterwards I kind of drifted away. In the last ten years I've come all the way
2 back. So it's sort of like, no, I don't think it affected me. I mean I don't think religion
3 affected me, nor did it, the place, the war, affect my religion. I think it just was kind of
4 made it stronger in a lot of respects. That you felt like everything was going to be ok, you
5 know your religion is there to back you up just like your family is, just like all the things
6 that you use to anchor yourself. That's a good foundation so that was a good foundation
7 for me.

8 RV: Did you ever witness any racial issues?

9 MM: Oh yes, nothing that I can, I mean nobody shot anybody, but I mean not in
10 front of me; but there was a fairly strong binding of the African American, the black
11 military with other black military. And white not as strongly binded with other whites,
12 and not very much bonding between the two. There was like there were two separate
13 bodies doing the same thing, but not really, I mean together, but not really personally,
14 closely, aligned. So yeah there was a lot of jokes, and stuff, all kinds of things going back
15 and forth, but nothing that I ever saw like eight black guys go up and beat one white guy
16 up, or eight white guys go beat up one black guy, or shoot each other or whatever, but it
17 certainly was a factor. I mean back then they all had that, by 'they' I mean the blacks had
18 a pretty close relationship with each other and they had a lot of signs, and signals and
19 hand shakes and movements and whatever. The whites weren't really let in on. So that
20 was kind of my first exposure to large groups not interacting closely.

21 RV: Did it affect the missions or the service that you had to perform everyday?

22 MM: No, no it didn't. I never, no, I never seen saw it. So they may have and I
23 didn't know about it. If somebody was, you know, not, didn't show up or was trying to
24 do something bad and I didn't know about it or whatever, but it never affected. I never
25 said, 'Well we can't fly this mission, we got a black guy on our crew,' or I never had
26 anybody come up to me and say, 'I am not going to salute you Lieutenant because you're
27 white' or whatever.

28 RV: What would you say was the most humorous event that you remember from
29 your time?

30 MM: Wow, well I mean there were humorous events everyday. I guess because
31 everybody was pretty footloose and fancy free and having a pretty good time, and

1 physically in good shape and mentally and emotionally in good shape, and, but I can't
2 remember one humorous event or incidents. And not because there wasn't any, it's just
3 because there are probably so many. I mean just every day was fine and I bet you if I
4 were to sit down and thought about it, that somebody fell off a barstool, or did something
5 funny like that. I think one of the funniest things or woke my eyes up a little bit, I don't
6 know if I said that one. I first went in country, I was at the Officers Club and this colonel
7 and this lieutenant got drunk and they were going to see who was going, I think I told you
8 about this, and were going to see who could swim out the furthest. They did that and
9 they almost got killed, and then they almost drowned. And then neither one of them
10 wanted to give up to each other. I guess that really wasn't a humorous thing but it really
11 struck me as to why they would expose themselves to that kind of danger just to prove
12 that they're, I guess, a man or whatever, which I think is fine. I mean I just think that is
13 fine to do. But it seems like there ought to be a different way to do that other than you
14 know really, that's for keeps. And you're out there in the bay, I mean there are sharks and
15 people with guns, and you're drunk anyway, and then now you're swimming. There is no
16 lights and there is nobody to pick you up if you get into trouble, nobody. I mean it's just I
17 just thought 'wow these guys are something else.' But I didn't consider it necessarily
18 humorous, although I thought it was kind of humorous that nobody else thought it was a
19 big deal that they did this. And it was like, 'Well somebody else did it last night, and
20 somebody else will do it tomorrow, and it's my turn tonight.'

21 RV: Is there a particular brave action that comes to mind that you remember?

22 MM: No. I mean yes, there were a lot of them I mean. But I think it was all
23 encompassing with doing the job. I mean what they engrained upon you is that you had a
24 mission to perform and that was above each and every individual. And the goal was more
25 important than the means of getting there. So whatever you had to do, you had to
26 accomplish the mission. So I don't know if it was bravery as much as it was that people
27 were engrained to do it. And a lot of people got shot at, and I mean we got shot at,
28 airplanes got shot at, people got, you know. There are lots of things that occurred; that the
29 exposure was there and some people didn't make it. Some people did get hit, but the
30 percentage of odds of you even getting shot at were fairly slim, but even if they got shot
31 at it was slim again that you would get hit. And if you got hit it was slim again that it

1 would knock you down. So if you consider to have an airplane with full Class A, coming
2 down to a small arms fire, landing in the middle of the jungle without any escort as being
3 brave or whatever, then we did that a lot. But it was not because we sat back there and
4 thought, 'well let's be brave today.' That was a mission so you didn't think 'well should I
5 or shouldn't I.' You just thought 'what's the best way for me to do that, what's going to
6 be the most effective or efficient to make sure that I get whatever I got in my airplane
7 down there on the ground and delivered.' And so I don't think anybody, I mean that I
8 personally know of, felt like they were doing anything brave except that they were
9 accomplishing what they were told to do.

10 RV: When did you actually leave CCK?

11 MM: I was there from I think I want to say January of '69 to December of '70,
12 well I was there 23 months, almost two years.

13 RV: And then you went to Woodbridge, England, is that correct?

14 MM: Right yes, with some training in between.

15 RV: I was going to say you got a chance to go back to the United States and spend
16 some time off with your family and everything like that. When you did leave, what were
17 your feelings about leaving the Theatre and leaving that war behind you?

18 MM: I was disappointed actually; I think I would have liked to have stayed more.

19 RV: Really, why?

20 MM: Well it was just because, I just, it was easy times, it was fun times. I didn't
21 have any responsibilities, I didn't have any kids, I wasn't married; had my own airplane,
22 flying all over the world, and they were paying me to do it. And you know, there were
23 times when it was a little bit, whatever, stressful physically or whatever, but basically it
24 was just a lot of fun for a pilot to have those kinds of missions, and go to those kinds of
25 places. So a lot of people extended. I extended and I stayed an extra, whatever, months
26 and then I kind of tried to do it again, but then they put out the word 'well we're not
27 going to extend anybody, more people are staying too long.' That would be the only
28 disappointment I guess. I didn't have any ill feelings that we lost the war, or that I wished
29 I would have done a better job, or I mean I didn't have any, they told me to leave so
30 that's what I did.

31 RV: What kind of reception did you receive back home in the United States?

1 MM: Bad.

2 RV: Can you talk about that?

3 MM: Well yes, it's the typical thing, I mean I've heard it lately. I didn't hear it a
4 while back, but yes you didn't, after a couple of three times of fighting your way out of
5 the bars back here because you were a pilot in Vietnam, you certainly learned not to talk
6 about that anymore. In fact you would say, 'I was at school or I was in Europe' or
7 whatever. You would never tell anybody, 'Oh well yes I was a pilot, I just got back from
8 Vietnam,' because that would be a certain argument; I mean certainly arguments, if not
9 more.

10 RV: Now was this with everybody in general, or would you talk about it with
11 your family and friends?

12 MM: Well I don't think I talked about it so much with my family and friends
13 because it just wasn't a topic of conversation. But I am talking about if you just go out in
14 a bar, and somebody might introduce you to somebody, and they say, 'Ok what do you
15 do or whatever. You used to say, 'Well I was a pilot in the Air Force, I am a pilot in the
16 Air Force, but after that you don't say that, I mean you may say, 'Well I was in the
17 military.' Where you been, or what you doing or, whatever, and you would say, 'Well I
18 am on my way to Europe and I've been to Texas, 'or whatever. It just wasn't worth it, so
19 I think that happened to almost everybody.

20 RV: Was there a time period or a time in your life when that changed, when you
21 felt comfortable talking about your experience in Southeast Asia?

22 MM: I think so. I think it certainly wasn't then, and it certainly was after,
23 probably after I got out of the military, that I think people just kind of forgot about stuff.
24 So they didn't, nobody cared that much about somebody being over there, or not being
25 over there. New generations and people don't know the arguments or the issues. And so
26 yes, I think that after a while it got to the point where now I kind of think of it as a badge
27 of honor, as opposed to a detriment. I mean I never did think of it as a detriment I just
28 thought that everybody else's perception was in detriment, and so I just didn't talk about
29 it, but although I was never ashamed of it, personally. I just did what I was trained to do.

30 RV: How much did you follow the war when you came home, I mean it was
31 winding down for the United States obviously.

1 MM: Yes it was and I lost track of it completely.

2 RV: Did you really?

3 MM: Yes, because I went to England. The only time I remember is when a guy
4 came as a navigator from the old squadron I was in. [He] was behind me by about six
5 months or a year. And I casually met him, briefly met him while I was there, he was just
6 getting there when I was well within a month of leaving. But anyway, so he came to the
7 new squadron where I was in England and he told me, 'Marty, you wouldn't believe it,
8 some of those crews won't fly those missions anymore,' and I said, 'What?' He said,
9 'Well yes, they won't because they're knocking them down, there knocking all these
10 airplanes down so the crews are saying, 'We want fighter cover or we want new tactics. I
11 mean the crews don't want to fly, I mean they don't want to fly the missions at all.' I
12 never even knew that that was an option, I mean it's like people told me afterwards
13 somebody went to Canada. Well I didn't even know that there was an option of going to
14 Canada. So in any event, I remember that, so that was the first time I heard about the war
15 probably in six months. I mean to know anything about it was, that kind of brought it
16 home. That they're really hot now, and for a crew to walk up to some Major, Lieutenant
17 Colonel or whoever it is, and it is not because it's that person but it's because it's the
18 rank, and to say, 'Well I don't think we want to fly this mission today the way it's getting
19 out here, we're too exposed.' It just never occurred to me. So anyway that was my next
20 contact with the war.

21 RV: And this is even when you're still in the service and you're around the
22 military everyday and there still is no discussion about it or little discussion about it, and
23 little news about it? Do you remember how you felt when the United States pulled out in
24 '73?

25 MM: You know that kind of snuck up on me, I think I heard about that, it's kind
26 of fuzzy, I'm not really sure how I found out about that. I guess I just didn't quite get it or
27 didn't believe it or didn't know it or something. I guess I felt a little bit disappointed that
28 evidently people were saying that we didn't win the war, or that we lost the war. And I
29 guess that was probably a feeling, as an Air Force pilot, that you would get that you
30 would prefer not to lose the war if you could help it and then somebody told me
31 afterwards that we lost the war so I didn't know.

- 1 RV: Our time is up for today, why don't we take a break?
- 2 MM: Ok.

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The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Martin Montemore
Conducted by Richard Burks Verrone, Ph.D.
September 4, 2003
Transcribed by Brooke Tomlin

1 Richard Verrone: This is Dr. Richard Verrone, I am continuing my oral history
2 interview with Mr. Martin Montemore. Today is September 4, 2003. It's a little after 10
3 a.m. Central Standard Time and I am in Lubbock, Texas in the Special Collections
4 Library Interview Room on the campus of Texas Tech and Mr. Montemore is in Kansas
5 City, Missouri. Sir why don't we pick up where we left off, you had come home from
6 Southeast Asia and we were discussing some of the incidences that happened to you and
7 some of your experiences. I asked about how much you kept up with the war effort in
8 Vietnam, was one of the things. Can you describe kind of overall U.S. policy after you
9 left, and what you thought say about the Vietnamization Policy and things of that sort?

10 Martin Montemore: You know I was fairly isolated from that because I was still
11 in the military but I was stationed, I went from Vietnam and I was stationed in England.
12 And so I don't recall a lot of coverage of the Vietnam War in the English Press and we
13 really didn't get any direct, like they would now, I mean direct news from the United
14 States or something like that on a routine regular basis. So I heard of the terms, I
15 understood what they were attempting to do from a distance. I did not have, I guess direct
16 access to what the specific policy, how they were implemented, or anything else but yes.
17 My belief is that they tried to distance themselves from the conflict by inserting the, I
18 guess the, military and decision makers in Vietnam and the actual combat and flights.
19 Tried to turn them over more to the Vietnamese. So I think, I guess, the goal was to
20 distance themselves gradually so that they could gradually withdraw and leave it up to
21 their own people to finish the job. But I'm not an expert on that or anything else, but

1 that's what I heard. I don't, I mean this is just me, but from what I could see it did not
2 appear to me that they would be successful in attempting to be, I guess, the victor in the
3 military part with the personnel, the amount, and the lack of sophistication of the
4 Vietnamese. I mean I think they kind of just sat back and let us fight the war; and then
5 when we started to try to train them in jet fighters and to try to re-supply, to try to do the
6 things that all the American troops were doing whether it would be on the ground or in
7 the air, that means it was pretty evident that that would not work.

8 RV: What was the discussion and the mood in England about the Vietnam War,
9 did you get any sense at all what the British public or some of the British military thought
10 about the war?

11 MM: You know I think, this is just an impression more than a specific
12 recollection of specific comment. But it appeared to me that British people were
13 supportive, supportive of the President, supportive of the war, and supportive of the
14 military probably more than the Americans were. Because Americans were obviously
15 involved in, you know, whatever demonstrations and other acts that would show their
16 displeasure with the continuing of the war, whereas the British were not involved. They
17 didn't have any troops there, they didn't have input, they didn't have any expense and
18 they didn't have any exposure so I think that the British were still, and have been,
19 basking in the WWII effort by the Americans. And I just think that anything American at
20 that time was ok with them. I felt like I was very well accepted by the English people.
21 Whether I was wearing my uniform on the way home from the base and was filling up
22 my gas tank or just generally out on the economy. It's not really difficult to judge, or to
23 see and conclude that a person is an American military when you run around in kind of
24 American clothes and you've got a short haircut, I mean you kind of stand out. I never
25 had, except one time. Never had any incident that I would consider to be rude or off color
26 because I was an American or American military. So I think, I guess what I am trying to
27 say, I think they were generally supportive, and they never voiced any condescending
28 comments to me ever about where I was, or what I did, or anything else.

29 RV: What was that negative experience?

30 MM: Well it had more to do, I think it just comes to, there are rude people in New
31 York City and in Kansas City, and Lubbock and wherever. But it was a [in] reference to

1 getting on a train and there was older gentlemen there. I was with an American girl and
2 we were about to sit down in a train compartment and he made the comment, something
3 like, 'Well if your going to be here, I don't want to be around any American people,' and
4 kind of got up. Actually I think I turned around and said, 'Never mind,' and I just walked
5 out and went somewhere else. But it was obvious he either had a bad experience himself
6 or someone in his family or something. It was obvious that I was an American, and he
7 even admitted that he did not appreciate me so that's all on that subject.

8 RV: Do you remember how you felt in April of 1975 when Saigon fell, and South
9 Vietnam fell?

10 MM: I don't know that I knew it at the time, the exact time. It might have been a
11 day or two later or whatever, but I think I was pretty disbelieving. I couldn't, I don't think
12 I could believe that we actually militarily could be thrown out of the country. I thought
13 we could make the political decision or the military decision to leave voluntarily. But I
14 was pretty shocked, to at least the comments or the commentaries I heard, was that it was
15 a military, you know, take over of Saigon. And I had been to Saigon many times and
16 thank goodness, relatively safe in the sense that you didn't have to worry about troops
17 that were going to come through the city and that sort of thing. It just made me feel real
18 funny as part of a bigger team that could be defeated, or at least it appeared, militarily.
19 It's what was left, although we were retreating, not retreating, but withdrawing, anyway it
20 still seemed funny that we were forced to withdraw at their time table, rather than at ours.
21 And that was basically accomplished militarily.

22 RV: You retired from the Air Force in 1975, correct?

23 MM: No, I left active duty Air Force, and I went to law school until 1978. I
24 graduated in 1978, and then I joined the Missouri Air National Guard as a C-130 pilot in
25 St. Joseph, Missouri. So then I retired from there in 1995, after another whatever that
26 would be, let's see 18 years plus the eight and a half [active] that I had, so I was right
27 around 27 years, somewhere in there.

28 RV: I'm asking because my next question is about your opinion of the media
29 coverage of the war, but you were in England after you finished your tour of South East
30 Asia, did you ever get a chance really to view how the media was covering the Vietnam
31 War?

1 MM: No. [Well], I probably did, I am sure I did in the transition period from
2 Vietnam to England. I had about a three or four month interim retraining on a slightly
3 different aircraft down in Florida. It was not my focus to attempt to try to follow the war.
4 But you know, you obviously you couldn't get away from it because it was on the news
5 every night. It appeared to me, yes that it was getting to be pretty... you know I thought, I
6 guess, one sided and maybe not very flattering. And it seemed that it was, you know,
7 maybe misconstruing some facts, or was emphasizing the negative. And there was a lot of
8 coverage of the war from the, not the military standpoint in Vietnam, but from the protest
9 standpoint in the United States.

10 RV: Right, more of that?

11 MM: Yes, more of that

12 RV: Ok, how much did you talk about it with your family when you came, and
13 before your transition over to England?

14 MM: Didn't have a lot of time back here. And I think most of the time that I spent
15 back here was probably more social with other friends and that sort of thing. And I don't
16 believe... and I never got [in] any kind of political or military discussion with my family
17 with regard to it. And I really never did address it with anybody else either actually.

18 RV: When you look back today on your service in Vietnam, in the war, how do
19 you feel about it?

20 MM: I'm sorry, say that one more...

21 RV: How do you feel about your service in the Vietnam War today?

22 MM: I feel pretty good about it, well, real good about it. To me, I was in the right
23 place at the right time to become a pilot, and proud to be trained. I was proud to be part of
24 that team and to go to a foreign country and on the orders and [on] the behalf of others,
25 and for the United States or whatever. I felt like I was happy to go then, and I'm happy
26 now that I went. And I am proud of my service back there. I mean there is a lot of others,
27 I am just saying I mean that's it, you know, either do or don't [I feel good about going].
28 But I'm saying it's not like I was there by myself or whatever. Hundreds of thousands of
29 people there so it's you know, but yes, I still feel very good about that. In fact, I think
30 probably before 20 years ago I never even mentioned I went. And now if anybody asks

1 where I went that's probably one of the main things I say is that well I spent a couple
2 years in Vietnam, and flying you know aircraft there.

3 RV: Why the shift, why the change?

4 MM: Well I think the American public has changed, the American public opinion
5 has changed in the last 15 or 20 years because of the other wars that we've had. Some
6 people wanted to protest those wars, but they did, and do, make a distinction between
7 protesting against the war and protesting against the military, they're two separate
8 [things].

9 RV: Right, so it's easier to talk about, it's more accepted to discuss such a war, a
10 traumatic event for the United States now versus then.

11 MM: Yeah, I think the attitude back then was 'that is an unjust war, how could
12 you go,' whereas if somebody feels like it is an unjust war they'll say, 'we support our
13 troops even though it is an unjust war' because it's not really the troops decision to go, or
14 not go or whatever. You're told, 'you do what you're told.'

15 RV: For yourself personally, individually, have you ever suffered any PTSD
16 incidence or any other kind of disabilities from your service?

17 MM: I don't know, I mean everybody has problems and so I do have, I don't have
18 flashbacks, but I do have, you know, recollections of loud noises and lots of activity, and
19 lots of bombs going off and then lots of fire and that sort of thing, so I do. I have a
20 physical reaction to loud noises like around the Fourth of July, or a car backfiring, or
21 whatever, but a lot of people have that, I would guess. A lot of people jump, and I jump.
22 And so it doesn't keep me up at night, I don't go to a psychologist or psychiatrist for
23 anything. Yes, I would say nothing specific other than startling; loud noises startle me,
24 that sort of thing.

25 RV: If you could change anything about your time in Southeast Asia, what would
26 it be?

27 MM: Oh, I don't know, I flew the airplane I wanted to fly, had the mission I
28 wanted to fly, and went to the places I wanted to go to. I mean I am proud that I went and
29 I am glad that I went, it was a good experience and I made it through it. Oh I am sure
30 there must be something not really necessary, could [have] slept a little bit longer on
31 some morning, or had better breakfast or I mean, what I mean is no, I have no major,

1 nothing that I can think of that I would, you know, I would change about anything. I
2 guess I would probably, if I could have, I probably would have tried to get more into the
3 culture and the history of that entire region including Thailand and Vietnam and the
4 places that I visited, which was a lot of places. I didn't spend a lot of time on that part of
5 it, it was more of the social aspect of just enjoying your time off by drinking and partying
6 or whatever. So no, I think that is probably the only thing that I would change or do
7 differently. If I had my 'after' thoughts before, then I would have done some more of
8 that.

9 RV: What was the most significant thing that you learned individually while you
10 were there?

11 MM: Well I guess it was a couple of things; that war is real, and that people don't
12 come back from war, and it's not a football game that, you know, you could play next
13 week if you lose, or you always have next year or whatever. The reality that people get
14 hurt and killed and they don't come home, or they come home in a box and that is the end
15 of their book. I mean it's not another chapter to be written, or whatever, and people were
16 permanently disabled and that permanent disability stays with them. I think I was pretty
17 much immortal, and oblivious to the consequences of military action whether it be
18 intentional by the other side, or even just an accident. I am sure there were thousands and
19 thousands that got hurt and or died because of their own accident or the accident of
20 another fellow American, but [the] result is the same, it doesn't matter, it is still
21 permanent. So from a philosophical stand point I think that I probably recognized parts of
22 that while I was there and then I certainly recognized it afterwards, later. [But], wow that
23 must have been a scary experience for a mother and a father to have their son flying over
24 there in combat for a couple of years, and not hear very often. I mean the reality of being
25 aware that I did not communicate with my parents very often I think there is something I
26 learned especially after I had my own child. Other than that I think I learned teamwork,
27 coordination, things get screwed up; you got to keep communicating. Just I don't know
28 lots of, I guess, lessons of life that are not, you know, so destructive. Things that you
29 learn just because you're part of a bigger organization, and everybody does, you know,
30 learn one way or another [from] some organization or another, and that's where I
31 probably learned mine.

1 RV: How has the war most affected your life in general?

2 MM: Well, since then I don't know that the war has affected me or my life in any
3 negative aspect. I mean I think from a positive aspect, I think, it's not because it was a
4 war, but because I had those experiences. I think I have a better understanding and a
5 better comprehension of things that most Americans probably have never been exposed
6 to, and you know never will be. I guess that's not good or bad, but it's just an experience
7 that is not universal, and so I don't think it's negatively affected my life, and I just think
8 it's just a accumulation of experiences that most people will not ever have.

9 RV: Has it benefited you in your professional career after you got out of the
10 service?

11 MM: Well it happens to be that I am doing a lot of aviation law. I don't know that
12 the war itself has benefited my career. Although I tend to be around a lot of other people
13 that are pilots, some of which were military pilots and some of which were not. But there
14 [are] pilots of just general aviation, civilian aircraft, and I think that [the] whole
15 background and history that I have is beneficial to me personally, in a sense that they
16 have a tendency to be more confident in giving a case to somebody that flies airplanes if
17 it's an airplane crash case, which only makes sense. It would be like saying [that]
18 somebody that [has] a medical malpractice case, and this person has training or is a
19 registered nurse, or a doctor or whatever. Well then obviously they're going to have more
20 information available to them, more experience than somebody that is not. So in that
21 respect it has.

22 RV: As far as the United States in general what kind of lessons do you think the
23 country learned from this experience in Vietnam?

24 MM: I assume that is the subject for many debates and discussions, I think.
25 Probably learned that it's difficult to win a war militarily when the populace do not, at
26 least, maybe the majority, that are not desirous of that change, or do resist the change
27 attempting to be made. I think from a military pilot standpoint, I think we learned a lot of
28 tactics and a lot of techniques that were a result of bad experiences. But I noticed in
29 flying 10 or 15 or 20 years later some of the same aircraft, that we went back to doing
30 some of the things that we did before that were abandoned in Vietnam. I guess you've
31 got to learn some of those lessons over again. I don't know that I have the observational

1 powers to say from a country wide stand point, from a nation wide standpoint, what
2 lessons there are to learn, that we did learn, except to say I think it probably has given the
3 nation a feeling of not being supremely in control of everything at all times, so whatever
4 that means.

5 RV: Do you thing Vietnam is still with the country today or has it been put to
6 rest?

7 MM: I think it maybe with individuals but it's not with the country.

8 RV: Have you done any reading on Vietnam?

9 MM: I don't know if it was intentional or not, but I've never read a book nor have
10 I ever seen a movie that had to do with Vietnam.

11 RV: So you don't know if that's intentional or not?

12 MM: Well I don't, I assume there must be some intent there, but I don't know. I
13 just never saw one.

14 RV: Do you go to movies? Do you attend movies regularly?

15 MM: No, not a lot but of course there are all kinds of movies you can get and see
16 on cable TV or you can bring home. And I've never rented one or [went] out of my way
17 to see one, or look for it on cable TV or any of those movies [things]. I have been places
18 where they have been on, and I might look at that for a couple of minutes; but never sat
19 down to watch one. I think part of it was that when I first heard there were movies about
20 Vietnam that came out, I just thought 'they'll never get it all and they'll never get it right,
21 they'll never get that in a movie.' That's just too huge, I mean there is no way; it's like
22 taking a picture of the Grand Canyon. If you've been to the Grand Canyon, you don't
23 want to see a picture of the Grand Canyon because it doesn't give [it] justice, it doesn't
24 portray it, that's what I am talking about.

25 RV: What are your thoughts about Vietnam today?

26 MM: The country?

27 RV: Yes, not the war, the country.

28 MM: I think the country is probably in better economic and health, higher then
29 many many other countries in that region and I don't think that anybody harbors any. I
30 don't harbor any [ill] will against Vietnam or the Vietnamese people or anything else. I
31 think that they're probably hard workers and intelligent and all the things that you hear;

1 and I know it's a beautiful country and I don't have any great desires to go visit, although
2 I would certainly not stay away from it. I think it's a fine country.

3 RV: So you would not really want to go back to visit?

4 MM: There again I think it would be difficult to go back and say well this is
5 where we use to do this or use to do that. I think it's probably changed and it's harder, I
6 just, I would probably go if that's what, say my family wanted to do. But if I had my
7 choice I would probably, and could only go to one place, I may go to Hong Kong or
8 Taiwan, or Thailand instead. If we're going to go to several countries I would not, not go
9 because of some unpleasant lingering thoughts.

10 RV: Have you had any contact with Vietnamese here in the United States?

11 MM: Very, very, very sporadically. I think I probably have only when we see
12 them something like a manicure or a hair cut or something like that. A lot of times there
13 are Vietnamese in there and I may talk to them for a couple minutes. When I ask them
14 where are they from and how long you been here and if they say Vietnam I ask them
15 where and usually I know where that is. So I just say, 'Oh I've been there too' and it
16 doesn't really get political or military or anything else, it's just like you know that is a
17 beautiful country and just a topic of conversation.

18 RV: What would you tell the younger generation today about the Vietnam War if
19 you have the opportunity to speak to say college aged students?

20 MM: I guess I would probably say by way of explanation, that the people that
21 were there were them. I mean it's the same people that they are, and their age and
22 younger, 17, 18, 19 years old- were out in the jungles risking their lives everyday. And
23 the people that are in college today, obviously are in college and they are not in the
24 jungle, and they don't have to worry about not coming [home] from those jungles, and I
25 don't think the American military would worry too much about that, young kids just
26 because of their lack of maturity. But the reality does set in sooner or later when you're
27 over there. So I guess by way of explanation that the people that were there were there
28 because they were draft age; could not, or would not, or did not go to college, didn't get
29 the deferments or they voluntarily joined. But most of them were drafted, and that's
30 where they were sent. So I think the people were, the vast majority, of the same people
31 that are in school today and have the same attitude, and likes and dislikes, and everything

1 else that they have today. They were in the wrong place at the wrong time or the right
2 place, right time, whatever you want to call it. So that they ended up becoming involved,
3 and most of the people that became involved it was not voluntarily. So I guess I would
4 just say that the ones that went over there are not any different than you.

5 RV: Have you ever been to the Memorial in Washington D.C.?

6 MM: Yes.

7 RV: What have been your experiences there?

8 MM: I was struck by the sanctity, the quietness, the solitude, by the
9 appropriateness of it. I just thought they did just a great job, if you want to call it, of [a]
10 memorial that I think that most Vietnam Veterans appreciate more than having a some
11 sort of light show with a revolving disc of music. I'm making it up, but what I'm saying,
12 rather than having a kind of memorial that is extravagant, I think this is very well done,
13 but subdued and sets the mood for what most Vietnam people, Vietnam Veterans who
14 served, people that served in Vietnam. I think that's the mood and the attitude about the
15 war- is that it was it at the time but there is a lot of sadness and what happened to others.
16 And to me, that Memorial exudes that, that attitude, that quietness, that mood so I was
17 very impressed with it.

18 RV: Have you been just one time or multiple times?

19 MM: Because I was in the Air Force as a pilot we would go to Washington D.C.
20 once or twice a year, maybe not that often, maybe once every two or three years but
21 every time I went, I went there. So yes I would probably say I have been there multiple
22 times, not ten but probably four or five.

23 RV: Now did you go by yourself or did somebody go with you?

24 MM: I think most of the time we had our crew with us, our flight crew, because
25 we are all military. There was no one else in my unit; well there was one I think, that had
26 been to Vietnam. And so everybody went to it just like you would go right into the
27 Memorial for Lincoln or Washington. It seemed to be an attraction, so I probably, I don't
28 remember ever going by myself. I remember going by myself with my family, with my
29 wife going one time, and that just happened to be because we were there on our vacation
30 and we went. So I don't remember ever going there by myself -but going with a crew of
31 three or four, or going with my wife are the times that I remember. But basically when

1 you get there to that Memorial, I think you disconnect from who you are with for the time
2 that you are there. And your thoughts and your attitude and characterizations of the whole
3 experience become a solitary one, as opposed to a group experience. In that respect if you
4 walk up with four or five people, when you're there. You're by yourself, and then when
5 you leave, you're back with four or five people.

6 RV: Do you think that's unique to that particular Memorial?

7 MM: I think it is. I think it is unique to the people that were there, and to that
8 Memorial. I think it is a combination of having been there, and realizing it wasn't all fun
9 and games like you thought it was going to be. And that there is a lot of people that [got]
10 hurt and killed. So the realization is from having been there, but the setting for the
11 Memorial compliments that. I think it brings it out and allows it to happen, as opposed to
12 some other kind of Memorial that might be gaudy, or so. That's why I think it is an
13 excellent Memorial.

14 RV: Do you think the United States Government has taken care of its Vietnam
15 Veterans?

16 MM: Yes I think so, I mean I'm not, I mean if I was in a different situation
17 obviously I may have a different opinion. But I think that people that go, and you know,
18 become the disabled vets who think they are owed something, I think that you can't
19 support them for the rest of their lives or anything like that but I mean decent medical,
20 service-connected. The GI bill helped me, I got through law school or else I wouldn't
21 have been able to go. So I had a pleasant experience, but then again I don't have the
22 unpleasantness of some kind of permanent problem, or something that may or may not be
23 taken care of by the VA. So, yes, I think so. I think the VA itself, or the government has
24 done fine by the Vietnam Veteran.

25 RV: Mister Montemore is there any thing else that you would like to add or
26 anything else that you would like to talk about that we have not covered in our series of
27 discussions?

28 MM: No, it was thorough (laughter) very thorough. Some of the questions, I mean
29 some of the areas are areas that I never really thought of. I just sitting around thinking,
30 and I wouldn't of [have] thought of those areas, so I think it is very well done, very

1 professional, and very comprehensive. And so no, I don't have anything specific or even
2 general that we haven't discussed.

3 RV: Ok, well very good. Thank you very much for your time sir and this will
4 conclude our oral history interview with Mr. Martin Montemore.